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# NEW ENGLAND IN MILWAUKEE.

PAPER READ BEFORE THE FIELD MEET OF THE WISCONSIN STATE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AT THE PUBLIC MUSEUM IN MIL-  
WAUKEE, BY ELLIS B. USHER, OCTOBER 12, 1901.

During a recent visit to New England, with my little daughter, who is a Badger by birthright, she was much diverted by the jest of a stranger who told her, when she gave her residence as Milwaukee, that he supposed that "all Milwaukeecans spoke only German," and an English lady, who sat in the next seat turned around and said "You must be a little English girl," and referred to her use of certain words as evidence. This incident suggests the remark of the Harvard professor who says that the best English spoken in America will be found within a hundred miles of Chicago, and that other significant statement, in Bryce's "American Commonwealth," that "The West is the most American part of America." Prof. Turner of our own state university has said, "The Western problem is no longer a sectional problem; it is a social problem on a national scale."

John Fiske, in his American Political Ideas, written in 1880, in a now very striking chapter on Anglo-Saxon "Manifest Destiny," quoted the toasts offered at an American dinner, in Paris where the climax came from a gentleman who said that if our manifest destiny was to be taken into account, he would propose this toast: "The United States—bounded on the north by the Aurora Borealis, on the south by the procession of the Equinoxes, on the east by the primeval Chaos, and on the west by the Day of Judgment."

Milwaukee has long been known and noted as a German city, and the Germans have, since a very early day in its history, been quite able to speak for themselves. I have a very good and quite satisfactory knowledge of the German, as we know him.

But I have a disposition to differ with him most in respect of some things of which he often feels most assured. For example, a certain class of Germans are prone to speak of the Puritan Yankee as the embodiment of illiberality, and to utter the

title with an inflection not altogether mellifluous. In turn, some of the descendants of the New England Puritans are equally free with their sarcasms as to "Sabbath breaking" and "beer drinking Germans." I do not marvel at these small passages at arms, but I would assign a very different reason for them, from that likely to be generally accepted by either party to the controversy. In my humble opinion these demonstrations are largely the result of likeness rather than of difference. The man who said that the Puritan came here "to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience and to make everybody else do the same," was not so strangely different from the German who came to Wisconsin with a purpose, at the outset, of establishing a German colony and founding a German state. The broad truth is that there is great ethnological likeness between the German and his Puritan prototype. There was even closer resemblance between the Pilgrims of the Mayflower and the later German immigration to Wisconsin. The Pilgrims had religious liberty in Holland but they did not wish to become Dutch. They came here from motives of patriotism rather than for religion's sake alone. The Puritans were intolerant, while the Pilgrims were more liberal.

The monument to Faith erected at Plymouth, Mass., is surrounded at the base by the figures of Morality, Law, Education and Liberty. The compact made in the Mayflower is called the germ of our constitution, and Parson Hooker's constitution of the Connecticut colony was the mould in which our liberal institutions of government were run. Representative government finds its best models in many of New England's historic experiences. But all these ideas were born in Germany. The history of the movement that culminated in the Reformation, was the history of our own earliest struggle for liberty of opinion, and its hand-maiden civil rights. This idea has its most striking exemplification in the Mississippi Valley which is at once the most American and the most Teutonic section of the United States.

I believe that any suitable discussion of the history of Milwaukee should have this sort of a background. We should fully understand and appreciate that the past is common property, if the New England men and women, and the German men and women of Milwaukee, are to look forward in right spirit and with proper assurance, to the future that is to make them all kindred, in blood, as well as in their historic inheritance of principle and purpose.

In 1850, two years after Wisconsin was admitted to the Union, the state had a population of 305,391, 110,471 of which was of foreign birth. Milwaukee at this time had 20,061 inhabitants and probably about its relative proportion of foreign born citizens. But, by 1860, Milwaukee had 62,518 inhabitants, 33,144, more than half of them, of foreign birth, and today, the

foreign born citizens who have settled here during the past fifty years, and their progeny, are probably 90 per cent. of the present population. Teutonic blood flows in the veins of at least 75 per cent. of our citizens. Studies of the census of 1880, led me to the conclusion that there were then, in Wisconsin, not more than 12,000 to 15,000 persons, who could claim an unmixed American ancestry, reaching back to Revolutionary days.

The beginning of Milwaukee was marked by the conjunction of the picturesque and the practical elements of the history of civilization on this continent. Solomon Juneau who was the first white settler, and a one-third proprietor of the town-site, represented the French pioneer, who was the first white man to tread the pathless forests of this territory. George H. Walker, who came from Virginia, and Byron Kilbourne, who was of Connecticut stock, represented the practical conflict for the Northwest territory that long waged between the New England and Virginia pioneers. These men owned the Milwaukee site. Juneau the East side, Walker the South side, and Kilbourne the West side. Kilbourne came here in 1835. He was the author of the first code of rules for self-government ever used on this ground. It was drawn for the regulation of squatters upon government lands, and the best testimony to its wisdom is, that it worked, successfully, and prevented disputes and contests. Byron Kilbourne was the third mayor of the city, in 1848, and from 1846, when Solomon Juneau was the first mayor under the charter, to 1863, when Edw'd O'Neill was chosen, the names of the mayors indicate English ancestry, and such names as Upham, Crocker, Prentiss, Lynde, and Chase, are all from New England or of New England ancestry. The first representative of the Teutonic element, to be chosen mayor was the late John Black, but he was really a Frenchman who spoke German, and in the 55 years of its existence, Milwaukee has had but three mayors of German birth or name, while fourteen or fifteen were of undoubted New England stock.

The prominence of New England thus suggested, is to be found in almost every part of the political field. Milwaukee has furnished four governors of Wisconsin. One of these Edward Salomon, is the only German who ever administered the office. He was elected lieutenant governor and succeeded to the governorship on the death of Harvey. Arthur McArthur, who was governor four days, and Wm. E. Smith were Scotchmen. The fourth, Gov. Geo. W. Peck, is descended from a Connecticut ancestry. Milwaukee's cosmopolitanism is well illustrated in this list.

Milwaukee's three United States senators, Carpenter, Mitchell and Quarles, all represent New England stock. Peter V. Deuster, who was elected in 1878, is the only German who has been chosen by Milwaukee to the House of Representatives, but New England blood had early prominence there, Wm. Pitt



Lynde, and the living Nestor of our pioneers, Daniel Wells, Jr., having led the way. Mr. Theobald Otjen the present incumbent, was born in Michigan. His father having been a Low Dutchman from Oldenburg. Milwaukee has, however, been quite cosmopolitan in her choice of representatives.

In education, in religious societies, in railway projects, in the formation of the charter, in the pioneer business enterprises of all sorts, the Yankee was prominent, if not dominant, though since the earlier days he has been numerically at a large disadvantage.

Such names as Kilbourne, Holton, Colby and Merrill, suggest the early days of our railway enterprises.

In the local fields of business Allis, Wells, Chapman, Kellogg, Blair, Bean, Sanderson, Wheelock, Kneeland, Flint, Palmer, Stowell, Bradley, Merrill, Camp and Bigelow, suggest great things in commercial and financial growth.

Her early editors were such men as Booth, King, Paul, Benton and Sholes.

Her bar has been adorned with the names of Arnold, Downer, Carpenter, Tweedy, Upham, Brigham, Carey, Quarles and Vilas.

The name of Increase A. Lapham, the man who promoted the present meteorological signal service of the United States government, is one that is conspicuous upon the pages of Wisconsin history, in connection with much modest but highly important service to the state.

Such names as Chase, Wolcott, Weeks, Noyes, Bartlett, Farnam, Copeland and Brown, suggest the early and present medical history of the city.

The first church service (Methodist) is believed to have been held in Deacon Enoch Chase's log house in 1835. The pioneer Protestant apostle of the state, the Rev. Cutting Marsh of Massachusetts, and the Rev. Moses Ordway, organized the Presbyterian church of which Immanuel church is the successor. Plymouth was organized in 1841, by the Rev. Otis F. Curtis, and in 1842, the Unitarian church was organized, the first pastor being the Rev. William Cushing of Cambridge, Mass. It will be found that from those days to the present, New England blood has been well represented in church work.

Old settlers tell me that much of the most refined and delightful society of early Milwaukee, centered about the group of New England families that formed a part of the pioneer settlement of this city.

It is not practicable to comprehend an exhaustive array of facts, in a brief paper. What I have done may, and I hope will, furnish inspiration to some more competent historian, for the record of the New England blood, in Milwaukee, is an important record of initiative and of devotion to all good and enterprising works. It is a record that deserves preservation.



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